

Hey Nance, How's the 80s? by jadencross

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Babysitting, Established Relationship, Everyone Is Gay, F/M, Families of Choice, Future Fic, Gen, M/M, Multi, Polyamory, Time Travel, Unconventional Families, dont ever type come into the tag bar, stay-at-home parent steve, steve is confusing on purpose, there is a whole herd of children

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Original Child Character(s), Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair

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Summary:

Why can't Nancy catch a break?

It's only been three months since El closed the gate, and now something's wrong with the kid.

Wait, who are all these children, and where did they come from?

1. Chapter 1

Notes for the Chapter:

So this has been burning in my head since I finished season 2 the first time. I know I have like 30 other wips in the Voltron area of things but I'm Stranger Things trash now, lol.

This was originally only going to be a oneshot but I decided to make it just a bunch of short chapters so I can post as I finish. A lot of this story is already completed, and I'll post chapters as I go. Most will probably be out today.

Also shout out to my friend, Bees. He's one of the reasons I finally started actually writing this instead of just telling my friends on long car rides to Arkansas lol.

Anyway, let's get this party started!

Nancy's mom had always told her that High School was the best time of her life. Nancy couldn't agree less.

Because here she was, only three months after El closed the gate, standing in the Byers living room with the whole gang once again.

To be honest, she wasn't quite sure if the world was ending this time because of the gate or the Mind Flayer or whatever. All she knows is that she had been hanging out with Jonathan in his room (they were *actually* studying, unlike the "studying" she used to do with Steve) when Hopper burst through the front door, cradling a sweating and panting El in his arms.

Joyce had been gently wiping the sweat off the young girl's forehead, talking to her gently to try to get her to tell them what was wrong, when Steve had rolled up, the other five kids in his backseat. Apparently, Will had left something at home so Steve had brought them all back to get it. The moment the kids saw El Steve had sighed

quietly, accepting that he was along for the ride this time, too.

Now Mike was glued to El's side, both his hands wrapped around hers. She still had yet to open her eyes, but they could all see how wildly her eyes were moving behind the closed lids.

"She had been more quiet than usual and I went into her room and she was just like this," Hopper had said when he sat El down on the couch.

It had been about 30 minutes since then, and El's condition hadn't improved.

"We need to get her to the hospital," Mike said, staring daggers at Hopper.

"Yeah, sure kid," Hopper ground back. "And what do we tell them? 'Hey this girl I've been hiding in my house for over a year is suddenly sick'? We don't know if this is related to her powers or not. And if it is, we could risk having El taken away again."

Mike grit his teeth. "We have to do *something* !"

Hopper turned, running his hand through his hair.

"Maybe she's having a power overload or something?" Dustin said, kneeling behind Mike.

"What?"

"I mean, Hopper said that sometimes she accidentally makes stuff explode."

"Yeah, but that's normally when she's upset," Hopper said.

Nancy stepped forward, trying to inspect the younger girl. She glanced up at Jonathan, who held the small pan of water than Joyce was using to keep the towel wet. He looked just as worried and confused as Nancy felt.

"I'm gonna get some more water," Joyce said, taking the water from Jonathan. She got up and headed over toward the kitchen, pulling

Hopper with her. Nancy could hear them whispering hurriedly at each other.

“Nancy?” Mike asked quietly.

“Yeah?”

Mike looked up at Nancy for a second before focusing back on El. “Is she gonna be alright?”

Nancy slid her arm around Mike’s shoulder, squeezing gently. “Yeah,” She said. She swallowed, then tried again, with more confidence. “Yeah. She’ll be fine. She’s been through worse.”

Mike didn’t have time to react because suddenly Steve was at her side and El was convulsing and Mike was yelling and Dustin was yelling and Jonathan was trying to help Steve hold El and keep from hurting herself.

El’s eyes snapped open and everything seemed to slow down.

Hopper and Joyce were still impossibly far away in the kitchen.

El ripped her hands from Mike’s grip, her eyes locking on Steve. She grabbed Steve’s jacket, pulling herself off the couch slightly and he pulled back a little in surprise.

Hopper and Joyce’s slow feet seemed to echo in the small room.

El’s eyes lit up, glowing a bright gold that seeped into her bones. The light moved, passing through her hands and into Steve’s chest. The light traveled up Steve’s neck and face before sparking in his eyes.

It felt like there was an explosion that originated from El, the blinding light seeming to pick Nancy up and rip Mike from her grip. Nancy tried to scream, but she felt something soft slam into her body and all her breath was gone.

She felt herself falling, and her back and head slammed into something hard.

Nancy groaned, feeling a hand on her chest, before the dizziness got

to her, and everything went black.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm going to warn you that there are A LOT of characters in the next bit, so I'm sorry if the characterization is a little screwy. I posted this because the next section is really difficult to do well lol. There are a lot of 1986 kids and other children to deal with, but it'll be fine lol. I believe in myself.

See you next chapter! (hopefully in a few hours!)

2. Chapter 2

Notes for the Chapter:

Lmfao I'm apparently completely incapable of keeping an update when I promise jeez. Sorry guys! This was written but then things came up and I just didn't have the time or energy to actually edit this. It's still not really how I would like it but I need to just post it and be done with it.

So here we go!

The first thing Nancy registered was the bright lights. The second thing was the spinning in her head. The third was the elbow in her side.

"Ow," Dustin said from on top of her.

Nancy groaned. "What happened?"

"El did something," Jonathan hissed through his teeth. Nancy had a suspicion that she wasn't the only one with one of the kids on her stomach.

"El! Are you okay?" Nancy opened her eyes to see Mike a few steps away from her, shaking a frighteningly-limp El.

Nancy slid her hand between Dustin and her chest, bracing her elbow before pushing him off her. He grunted, but used her momentum to roll down her body and over Lucas, who was apparently trapping her legs. Lucas swatted at him half-heartedly before rolling off Nancy himself. Nancy sat up, taking in their surroundings, letting the other boys and Max sort themselves out.

The room was bright orange, the furniture faded and covered in bedsheets. There were a few windows, but the curtains were drawn, as were the ones over the glass door. There was what appeared to be a dining room table and a kitchen, and a desk with some black thing she didn't recognize. Paintings of mountains and trees lined the walls,

a single picture of four girls ranging from probably 13 to 20 hung on the wall behind her. There was a doorway that lead out into a hallway that ran parallel to the room, but that was all Nancy could see without exploring further.

One thing was for sure: This was not the Byer's living room.

"Where are we?" Jonathan asked from her side, startling her a little.

"I have no clue." Nancy glanced at El, who Mike now had sitting up, choosing not to crowd the girl who was already surrounded by the younger members of their apparent monster-fighting group. "El, do you know where—"

"What the fuck was that?" a muffled, female voice called from down the hallway.

"We'll check!" A higher-pitched voice responded.

There was the loud sound of running feet and suddenly three young girls rounded corner from the hallway and stopped dead, staring at the group with shock in their eyes.

Nancy braced herself, not sure what was going to happen. Their clothes were strange and matching with images of dinosaurs and UFOs scattered across their pajama pants and the phrase "Dinosaur Lazer Fight" written in bubbly print across their chests. They all had brown eyes and blonde hair, their build and height very similar. They looked to be about Mike's age. Nancy felt almost like she was looking at three copies of the same teenager.

"Daaaaaaaaaad!" two of the yelled at the same time as the third just stared at them.

"What'd you babies do? D'yah break something?" a boy said as he rounded the door behind them. He stopped just as the girls had, three more boys and two more girls stopping behind him.

"Who are—" the boy started to say before being cut off by one of the first three girls.

"Mom!"

Nancy didn't have time to brace before she was hit in the gut by the girl, the others still holding their distance.

"H-hi," Nancy gasped, trying to regain her breath.

"Where are we?" Mike asked.

"How did we get here?" Lucas asked.

"Why did you call Nancy your mom?" Dustin asked.

The other kids just stared.

"Hawkins," El responded weakly. Mike turned to her after she answered his question.

"What?"

"We're still in Hawkins," El elaborated. She pointed at the other group of kids. "Children."

That seemed to break them out of their shock.

"We're not kids!" one clamoured, while another shouted "We're older than you!"

The kids started shouting over each other until a boy, the one who had entered after the girls and who seemed to be the oldest of the bunch, cut them off.

"Guys, it's just Aunt Nancy and everyone else. Just chill out."

"But it's Mom from the future!" the girl around Nancy's waist shouted in reply.

"You mean the past," another boy corrected.

The girl narrowed her eyes. "Shut up, Ryan."

Ryan gasped, placing his hand over his chest like he was shocked. "Oh how could you, Samantha? I was only trying to educate the feeble minds in the world and what do I get? Criticism. That's all I ever get!"

“We get it,” another boy deadpanned. “You’re in theater.”

Ryan whirled on him. “I’m not just *in* theater, Drake. I *live* in the theater!”

Drake rolled his eyes and locked them on Dustin. “Look at what you made,” he said in the same tone.

“Wait, me?” Dustin placed his hand over his heart, looking bewildered.

Down the hall, another door banged open.

“What are you guys doing?” the first female voice said, coming closer. A woman came into view, her long curly hair and defined faceshowing Nancy a picture very similar to the one she saw every morning.

“Oh, is today the day Dad said Mom and Uncle Mike came to the future?” she said, not phased in the slightest.

“Apparently,” one of the triplets (because that’s what they had to be, right?) said.

“Hold on,” Nancy said, deciding she had had enough. “You’re saying that we traveled to the future?”

The oldest girl nodded, a smile on her face. This must be way in the future, then, since this girl claiming to be her daughter was older than she was now.

“And you’re all Nancy’s kids?” Mike asked, making a face of disgust.

One of the boy’s mirrored it. “Ew, no. Only Barbara, Lily, Samantha, and Stephanie are hers. The rest of us are cousins.”

“So then are the rest of you siblings?” Dustin asked, always asking the wrong questions.

The first boy answered. “Me, Ryan, and Chris are all your kids. Crystal, Millie, and Jake are Uncle Will’s, and Drake and Shelby are Uncle Lucas and Aunt Max’s.”

“Gross,” Max and Lucas said in unison.

“Dustin, you’re missing the point here,” Mike said, exasperated. He turned to the other kids. “What year is this?”

“2017,” the oldest girl responded.

Nancy’s jaw dropped. How on Earth...

“It’s probably best that we get Dad,” the oldest girl continued, watching Nancy’s face. “He was there in your time when this happened.” She turned, continuing down the hallway opposite of where she came from.

Nancy felt anxiety form in the pit of her stomach. Who was her future husband? The kids hadn’t seemed to have recognized Jonathan. Had she wound up with someone else? How had she and Jonathan broken up? Did it have to do with her fears about going to college? But wait, they were still in Hawkins. Was it someone she already knew now, or someone she hadn’t met yet?

And why was this her life, that she was in situations like this?

“I can’t figure out which one is dad,” one of the triplets said, looking between Jonathan and Will. “How old was he compared to Uncle Jonathan?”

A younger girl from farther back answered, “He’s gotta be the younger one.”

“No,” one of the boys chimed in, “Uncle Jonathan looks nothing like him. Maybe they picked up two Uncle Will’s?”

“That’d be dumb,” another boy responded.

Out of the corner of her eye Nancy spotted Jonathan ready to speak, when a huge gush of steam poured out of the hallway, causing all of the them to cough violently.

“Barbara, can you hold Jake?”

Nancy froze. That voice. It was deeper than in her time, but she

recognized it all the same. She felt Jonathan stiffen beside her.

“Yeah, Dad. Do you want me to take Terry, too?”

“No, I think it’s best that I hold on to her for now.”

“Is that...?” Lucas asked, glancing at Nancy. She swallowed.

Barbara reentered the doorway, the soft sounds of footsteps behind her. It couldn’t be. There was no way it was—

A tall man rounded the corner, his hair dark and smile wide. There was a girl only a little younger than Mike at his side, his hand enveloping hers. There were smile lines around his eyes and mouth, and his cheeks were a little chubbier, but it was impossible to not recognize him.

“Steve?” Dustin said, a mixture of incredulousness and confusion in his voice.

“Hey, Dustin,” Steve smiled, then turned to Nancy. “Hey Nance. How’s the 80s?”

Notes for the Chapter:

Thanks do my friendo Nikia for helping me actually get up the nerve to post this. And another shoutout to Bees bc he's amazing and deserves it.

I was about to make another promise about when the next chapter would be available but if I do then the ice storm my town is about to have might strike. The universe likes breaking my promises.

I will be back soon, I promise!

See you next chapter!

3. Chapter 3

Notes for the Chapter:

Hello all. This would have posted sooner but my computer HATES ME and it took me upwards of 20 tries to copy this chapter to ao3. Let me die lmao.

There are two chapters left and an epilogue and one is already written and just needs to be edited. So stay tuned.

Lets go!

No way. No fucking way. Steve Harrington. Steve *motherfucking* Harrington was Nancy's husband. Jonathan suppressed the urge to swallow hard, figuring that the, frankly, ridiculous amount of children staring between Steve and Nancy would latch onto it. He already felt red hot embarrassment creeping up the back of his neck. He didn't need dozens of kids to notice and make it worse.

Of *course* Jonathan would never be able to end up with Nancy. Not for real, anyway. She was just too great and Jonathan was just...Jonathan. The creep who had no friends beside his kid brother and who lived in a house with a crazy mother and had been abandoned by his shitbag father.

Really, he should have seen this coming.

"Wait," Nancy's voice was hard, and Jonathan barely suppressed the flinch at her tone, "I marry *you* ?"

Jonathan risked a glance at her, not quite understanding why Nancy found it so hard to believe. Did she actually think they would have wound up together? Did she not know who he was and who she was?

But no, she looked at Steve almost angrily, her lips fixed in a hard line and eyes not wavering from her future-husband's face.

Jonathan risked a glance at Steve, the older man's face showing more curiosity than anything. Steve quirked an eyebrow, glancing at

Jonathan like he was lost, before something apparently clicked.

Steve laughed, loud and bright. When he looked at them again his face was split with one of his signature “That Has to Hurt After Awhile” smiles. “Of course not, Nance,” Steve chuckled. “It’s not legal.”

Jonathan felt knocked off balance. Steve’s eyes glittered with mirth, and Jonathan couldn’t find any hint of...well, *anything* else that would give away whatever that meant.

“What?” Nancy asked, and a little of the light drained from Steve’s eyes, changing them from blinding to the regular sparkling they did whenever he looked at Nancy.

“Alright, kiddos,” Steve said, addressing the heard of kids blocking his way into the room, “skedaddle.”

“But Daaaaaaaad,” the girl still attached to Nancy whined.

“No buts,” Steve said, his voice hardening slightly in a way that made Jonathan feel warm in his chest. “You kids are almost as bad as your parents and I can’t trust you guys not to give away spoilers.”

“Like how Uncle Will is gay?” one of the boys said. He was met with a smack upside the head by a girl.

“Dude!” she exclaimed.

Jonathan risked a glance at Will and, yep, he had shrunk into his shirt, his friends all looking at him curiously except Mike. Jonathan wondered if Mike knew.

“Dad!” came an anxious screech from the hallway. “Help!”

Steve turned to the oldest girl, Barbara. “Can you go back and help Lily with her hair?”

Barbara gave a thumbs up and handed the kid in her arms to Steve before heading back down the hallway towards the screech.

“The rest of you,” Steve pointed with his eyes because of his lack of

free hands. "Scatter."

Apparently this was a command Steve gave regularly because the kids split off into their groups and headed back to wherever they had come with only a little grumbling. After only a few seconds the only ones left were the triplets and Steve with the two youngest. Samantha was still wrapped around Nancy's waist.

"Sa-am," Steve sort of sang. "You guys need to go, too."

In response, Samantha gripped onto Nancy harder, causing her to wince.

Steve sighed, then looked down at the other two. "Steph, why don't you get your sister and start making some hot cocoa for everybody? You can use the downstairs kitchen." Steve wiggled his eyebrows, like this was something they usually weren't allowed to do.

"Okay," Stephanie replied. She strode over towards Samantha and put her hands on her sister's, whispering something Jonathan couldn't hear. He saw Nancy's eyes widen slightly at whatever was said, and then Samantha was removed from Nancy and they headed out into the hallway.

"Uncle Steve?" The final triplet (wait, what? "Uncle"?) pulled on Steve's pant leg. "Why are there two Dads?" She pointed at Will and Jonathan, her finger moving between them.

Steve chuckled a little. "Only one of them is your Dad," he said gently, nodding at Jonathan. "That's your Uncle Jonathan."

"Oh!" The girl's face lit up and she turned and ran towards Will, hugging him tightly before letting go and taking off after Samantha and Stephanie. She yelled "I can't wait for the real you to come back, Dad!" over her shoulder before disappearing.

"Wait," Dustin was pointing between Will, Steve, and Nancy. "Were those kids not triplets?"

"They might as well be," Steve said. "They were all born the same day and look the same, but technically only Stephanie and Samantha are twins and Crystal is their cousin. But I guess that's what happens

when one brother picks a surrogate who just happens to look really similar to the other brother's wife." Steve winked, like it's an inside joke, but Jonathan was lost. Really, *really* lost.

"And Will's gay?" Dustin focused on Will, who looks like he's seen a ghost.

Steve sighed. "Spoilers," was all he said. He glanced down at the girl at his side, her face fixated on El and Mike who still had yet to get up from the floor.

"Ok, *what* is going on?" Max finally snapped, having lost her patience somewhere with Jonathan's conception of reality.

Steve pulled the girl away from himself, letting his grip on her hand slacken but not removing it entirely. The girl looked back at Steve, eyes wide, and Steve gave her a little smile.

"It's fine Terry, just your Mama," he said softly. "You don't have to be afraid. They won't bite." He glanced at Mike and El before chuckling softly. "And even if they did, you're the strongest person in the room right now."

That seemed to make sense to the girl, as she let go of Steve's hand and walked slowly over towards El.

El stared back, cocking her head slightly.

The girl (Terry?) stopped in front of El and Mike, kneeling down and taking El's hand in hers. "Hi, Mama," she said with a small smile.

"Hello," El replied.

"I can help you get back faster," Terry said. "Will you let me?"

There was a pause, then El nodded. "Yes."

Terry smiled again then closed her eyes. El did, too.

There was a few moments of silence, then. It was only broken by Steve turning to the boy in his arms.

“Do you want down?” Steve asked.

The boy shook his head.

“Okay.”

Steve took a few steps and entered the kitchen, setting the boy down on the counter but keeping his arms around the kid and his body close.

“So, questions?” Steve said, looking at them all.

The kids all started shouting at once.

“Why are we in the future?”

“You’re Nancy’s husband?”

“What’s wrong with El?”

“Why are there so many kids here?”

“Are we still in Hawkins?”

“What is going on?”

Steve held his hand up, the kids falling silent. Jonathan watched in awe. Man, Steve was a good babysitter. Or at least, he would become one.

“El had a power surge that reacted with some things in the room and her power took everyone who wasn’t already here—” Steve faltered, glancing at Jonathan, then cleared his throat. “Or maybe it took people closer to her? I dunno, she accidentally took you guys to the future.

“I am not technically Nancy’s husband because we aren’t married. Her insurance wasn’t really what we were looking for.

“El is just tired. Terry is helping her regain her energy faster and once El’s feeling better Terry can help getting you guys back.

“There are tons of kids here because I was crazy and not only set up a

daycare as my dayjob but also let you heathens dump your kids on me when you guys are busy. Or run away because El informed everyone but me that you all would be coming and are trying to prevent a paradox.

“Yes, we are still in Hawkins.”

“See above.”

Jonathan stood there, blinking. Steve ran a daycare?

“So we just...wait for El to get better?” Mike asked.

“Yep.” The boy on the counter started pulling on Steve’s collar and Steve put a hand up to stop him.

“So those are...all our kids?” Dustin stared at the hallway.

Steve grimace slightly. “They sure are.”

“I take that as an insult!” Dustin crossed his arms.

Steve just stared at him deadpan. “Look, I’ve had to babysit both you and your kids. I have *seen* some things.”

“Like what?” Lucas asked.

“You have no idea how hard it is to change a psychic’s diaper when she’s throwing a tantrum.” Steve pointed at Mike and El. “You guys almost killed me, letting me look after her while she was in her terrible twos.”

“You run a daycare?” Nancy said, her voice strangely soft.

Steve glanced at her, his face slackening. “Well, I didn’t do so hot in college and Dad was—” Steve cut himself off, his eyes darkening. “Dad was being difficult. You were the one who suggested it.”

“Un’ Steev’?” the boy on the counter asked quietly, pulling on Steve’s sleeve.

“What’s up, Jack?” Steve looked back at the boy, his face split with a

smile again.

Jack opened his mouth a few times before giving up and making small, shaky movements with his hands.

“Yeah buddy, of course!” Steve said, scooping the boy up. He placed his hand over Jack’s head and pushed it slightly away from his face as he turned the other way to shout down the hallway. “Joseph! Millie! Drake! Come here please!”

“Coming!”

There was a small storm of feet and then two boys and a girl appeared in the hallway.

“Can you guys go with Jack?” Steve asked, setting the youngest boy down in front of them. “He wants to show everybody his toys.”

“Of course, Uncle Steve!” The girl replied, taking Jack’s hand.

“Dustin, Max, Will, and Lucas,” Steve turned toward the four mentioned, “Jack wants to show you his toys. Will you go with him?”

“Uh, sure?”

Steve smiled. “Thanks. I’ll call you back when El’s better.” He turned back to the other kids. “Keep them *away* from Chris, you hear me? We don’t need him making another paradox.”

“Aye aye!” the two boys replied.

“Come on!” one of the boys called, then the whole group slowly trickled out.

“*Another* paradox?” Nancy asked when they were gone.

Steve smiled. “Spoilers.”

“Is that all you’re gonna say?” Nancy said, exasperated.

“Well, technically, I’ve already given you way more information than you needed,” Steve replied, heading back into the kitchen. “I

remember Hopper getting onto me more than once about how much info I give you guys when you do these things.”

“We do this again?” Mike’s tone mirrored Nancy’s.

Steve just smiled, opening a cabinet.

Another small silence fell over the room as Steve busied himself in the kitchen, humming a song that Jonathan had never heard before. Jonathan shifted awkwardly, glancing between Nancy and Steve.

Nancy was practically *glaring* at Steve, eyebrows lowered and arms crossed. Jonathan didn’t understand it. Why was *she* upset?

“So what,” Nancy hissed, “you’re just gloating that you won?”

Steve stopped, blinking at them before turning back to press a button on what Jonathan had to assume was a microwave.

“Won what?” Steve glanced between Jonathan and Nancy, eyebrows furrowed. “Wait, what year did you guys come from?”

“1986,” Jonathan practically whispered.

Steve sucked air through his teeth, mouth spreading into a sort of grimace.

“Oh,” Steve glanced at Jonathan. “And since you’re not wearing that jacket I assume it’s before the summer?”

Jonathan glanced down at his shirt, confused.

“It’s March, yes,” Nancy ground out. “Why?”

“Well, it makes sense why you’re so defensive if it’s before summer ‘86,” Steve said like that explains everything. The Microwave beeped, and Steve took out a steaming mug of...something.

Steve took it over to El, kneeling down to hand it to Mike. “Make sure she drinks *all* of this. It tastes gross, but it’ll make her recovery time in the past much better.”

Mike nodded, maveuvering so that El was sitting up a little more.

Steve stood, looking back over at the other two. "You guys are allowed to sit down, you know."

"What happens this summer?" Nancy demanded.

Steve stared at her for a second, then switched his gaze to Jonathan. The older man glanced down, and Jonathan realized that he was blushing.

"You both just...," Steve, reached up to rub the back of his neck, "stopped running away from your feelings, I guess." Steve put his hand down, stepping closer to the kitchen. "I did, too."

Jonathan had no idea what that meant, but, coming from Steve Harrington, it was most likely an insult.

"So, what," Nancy snapped, "I was always *destined* to wind up with you?"

Steve stopped in the kitchen, having placed the counter between himself and the other two.

"Uh...," Steve scratched the side of his face, with his index finger, looking at nothing in particular. "Kinda?"

Nancy opened her mouth, her face displaying her anger when Steve raised his arms, waving quickly. "Calm down!" he said quickly. "It's not like that!"

"Then what's it like?" Nancy asked, her face dark.

Steve sighed heavily. He opened his mouth, probably to explain his weirdly cryptic words, but then there was the sound of a door banging open and a different girl appeared in the hallway.

She was brunette, her hair falling in sweeping waves over her shoulders and bangs that were swept across her face . She wore a royal purple gown, sequins and jewels adorning her waistline and neck. She had large earrings that fell all the way to her shoulders, the silver and white jewelry matching the headpiece in her hair. Her

brown eyes were wide, and her face was slightly rounded with youth, though she was about the other girl, Barbara's, height.

"Dad!" the girl exclaimed, her wild eyes locking on Steve. "Is this okay? Do I look good? Fix it!"

Steve chuckled good-naturedly, all his previous panic gone. He took a few steps over to the girl, pressing one clip from her hair in a little more before putting both hands on her shoulders, catching her eyes.

"You look fine, Lily." Steve gave her a thumbs up. "Like a million bucks."

Lily glanced down before looking up through her bangs up at her dad. "Do you think Ashley...?"

Steve chuckled, planting a kiss on Lily's forehead. "Tongue-tied for sure."

Lily smiled, most of the panic gone from her eyes and only a little bit of nerves replaced it.

"Now," Steve stepped away from Lily to look back down the hallway "where is your—"

"Daaaad!" a voice called as another door slammed open, causing everybody to wince. "We got the cocoooooooo!"

"Papa's finally ready, too!" another, very similar voice cried.

"Alright, kiddos," a new, deeper voice came from the same direction. "No need to yell."

The triplets (twins? Whatever.) dashed into the room carrying mugs of hot chocolate that were splashing dangerously as they moved.

Lily's eyes followed the triplets, before focusing on Nancy, Jonathan, Mike, El, and Terry. "Wait, Mom, Papa, and Uncle Mike are here?" She looked up at Steve, "I don't want another paradox at my first prom!"

Papa?

“There won’t be one,” Steve said before turning and smiling towards the hallway. “I thought that I was gonna have to come down there and dress you myself.”

“I’m sure you would have enjoyed that,” the deeper voice replied, mirth audible. A man stepped into view in the hallway. His dirty blond hair was cut short, the black suit doing nothing to hide the muscle on his chest and arms. His tie was loose, the bright purple matching Lily’s dress. A camera (or what he assumed was a camera in the future. That thing looked *crazy*) hung around his neck, a light brown satchel hanging off his shoulder.

Jonathan felt his blood run cold. The man’s face was sharp, a scar running perpendicular to his jaw, stark white against his tan skin. But that wasn’t what concerned him. This person was...

This person was *Jonathan* .

Jonathan glanced over to see Nancy’s jaw on the floor, too.

“Now, remember,” Steve continued like this wasn’t terrifying and confusing, sliding future-Jonathan’s bag off his shoulder and straightening his suit, “Ashley lives at the corner of Willow and Jefferson. Big white house, you can’t miss it.”

“Got it,” future-Jonathan smiled at the other man, the light in his eyes similar to how Steve always looked at Nancy.

“Sharon wants copies off all the pictures,” Steve started tying future-Jonathan’s tie, “and she also would really like at least one picture at City Hall for whatever reason.” Steve looked up and winks. “But I’m sure she would let it slide if you ‘couldn’t make it’.”

“I got it,” future-Jonathan repeated.

Steve finished the tie and looked up at the other man. “Also don’t forget that Stacy Henderson will be—”

“Babe,” future-Jonathan grabbed Steve’s shoulders, and Jonathan felt himself blushing despite himself. “I got it. It’ll be fine.”

Steve paused, then smiled. He patted Lily’s shoulder. “Both of you

make sure to text me.”

“Got it, Dad,” Lily replied before turning to future-Jonathan. “Let’s go, Papa!”

“Alright, alright,” future-Jonathan chuckled, turning to follow.

“Wait, Jonathan,” Steve stopped down to grab Jonathan’s bag from the floor, “you forgot something.”

Future-Jonathan froze, turning slowly towards Steve before taking a quick step forward and kissing him on the forehead.

Jonathan thought he was going to die.

Steve laughed. “No, you goof. Your bag.”

“Oh right,” future-Jonathan smiled taking the bag. He slung it over his shoulder, glancing over Steve’s to see Terry, Mike, and El.

“What’s Terry doing?” future-Jonathan asked.

Steve glanced back and Jonathan saw Terry crack an eye. “I’ll tell you later.” Steve turned back to Jonathan. “Now go!”

Future-Jonathan laughed, following Lily out into the hallway. There was the sound of a door shutting, a weird rumbling sound, and a car starting, before Steve turned to those still in the room, a cocky smile on his face.

“Sorry,” Steve said, moving into the kitchen to grab a mug of cocoa. “Since there are two Jonathan’s Terry made it so he can’t see you guys.” Steve took a sip. “We don’t want a paradox on Prom Night.”

There’s a long silence, the sound of Steve sipping the only noise. The triplets must have disappeared during the commotion.

“Not that I care,” Mike said from over by El, “but what the hell. How complicated do you three have to be?”

Steve laughed again. “It’s not complicated,” he said. “The three of us are dating, but only Jonathan and I are married because, being

essentially a stay-at-home Dad, I need health insurance and Jonathan's was the best."

"Wait, two guys got married?" Jonathan turns to see Will and Dustin in the hallway. They must have come up to see what was happening.

Steve straight up grins. "Yeah buddy. Supreme Court ruled it legal two years ago."

Will's face fell slightly. "Only two?"

Steve's smile became a little softer. "Well, a few states had already made it legal before that. Jonathan and I hopped the border to do it."

"So wait," Dustin asked, "how do all three of you have kids?"

"Well, see," Steve grinned at the younger boy, "when three people love each other very much—"

"Gross!" Mike called from the corner.

"I *mean* ," Dustin clarified, "how do you know which kid belongs to you?"

Steve shrugged. "It doesn't really matter," he said. "We're pretty sure Samantha and Stephanie are Jonathan's because of how similar they look to Will's kid, Crystal, but we just raise them like we're both their Dad. I mean, that's what we are." Steve tipped the cup all the way and drained the rest of the cocoa. He set the mug down and gestured to the rest of the mugs on the counter. "There's cocoa if you want."

"Yes please!" Dustin cried, rushing forward and grabbing a cup.

Will followed more hesitantly, but he smiled in his cup when Steve smiled back.

"So this summer....," Nancy practically whispered.

"Jonathan and I finally figure out we're bisexual?" Steve flashed one of his trademark "Harrington" smiles. "Yep."

"And how does it...go?"

Steve's smile sours a little. "Well, I wouldn't want you two to know something that could change the timeline or whatever." He gathers a few cups in each hand. "But trust me, it'll be an adventure."

He takes a few steps towards the hallway before turning back over his shoulder. "Oh, but I can tell you one thing: the Byers house is always the best place to be when the world is ending. Be it supernatural or otherwise." Then he slipped into the hallway and disappeared into his (their?) house.

Notes for the Chapter:

I just want you all to know that I had to get those kids out FAST because there are so many. Here's a nifty little key.

Nancy, Jonathan, and Steve - Barbara 20, Lily 17, Samantha 14, and Stephanie 14

Mike and El - Terry 10

Lucas and Max - Drake 14 and Shelby 12

Will - Crystal 14, Millie 11, and Jake 4

Dustin - Joseph 15, Ryan 12, and Chris 11

The only two not specifically pointed out were Shelby and Chris lol, but Chris was the one who gave the spoiler about Will and Shelby was the one who slapped him in response.

Whoo this was exhausting. Chapter four coming soon!

See you next chapter!

4. Chapter 4

Notes for the Chapter:

Here we go! I had this one finished but didn't post it until I finished writing the next one in the hopes that my insatiable desire to share my writing would drive me to continue writing. It did not work lol.

I hope you enjoy this! I wrote this forever ago and haven't looked at it since so best of luck!!

"Well that was cryptic," Mike deadpanned from the corner.

"I mean," Dustin shrugged, killing his cocoa, "most girls love a man of mystery."

"He gave so much away, though," Will chimed in, holding his cup with two hands.

Meanwhile, Jonathan had officially ascended to a different plane of existence.

No way. No *fucking* way. This had to be an alternate reality. No way this was the future. No way was Jonathan destined to date both Nancy Wheeler *and* Steve Harrington.

Sure, Steve was cute, with the little laugh he does when he doesn't want people to know they made a good joke, and the smiles, big and small, that always made Jonathan have to stop to breathe for a second so get himself under control. And sure, maybe Jonathan really liked Steve's douchebag hair and, yeah, maybe he had imagined Steve laying in his lap before and maybe he'd had nightmares that wouldn't be so scary once Steve showed up to save him, just like a year ago, but that didn't mean anything. He thought about Nancy the same way.

Jonathan froze.

Yeah. Nancy. The girl he was dating.

He still wasn't used to that.

Okay. Yeah, this is fine. Whatever. He thought about Steve *fucking* Harrington the same way he thought about his girlfriend. That's manageable. And explainable. Steve had been there at the house, too. That's gotta be why.

Shared trauma.

Jonathan wished that El had taken them *back* in time so that he could deck Murray in his dumb, know-it-all face. Then again, he *had* helped them so maybe that wasn't a good idea.

Fine. Jonathan may be queer. Bisexual's what Steve called it. That's great. If what that kid had said earlier was true, then Will is, too. And if both her sons are queer, then maybe his mom won't get as mad and throw them both out.

But wait. If Jonathan was bisexual, and he was dating *Steve Harrington* , then that meant that not only was Steve bisexual, too, but that *he felt the same way about Jonathan* .

Oh god.

He's going to pass out.

"Hey."

Jonathan almost jumps through the roof when Nancy puts a hand on his shoulder, her face a little paler than normal, and her eyes a little glassy, but she seemed to be taking it better than Jonathan was.

Probably because she's not going through a sexual crisis , he thought.

"You okay?" Nancy examined Jonathan's face, but he could tell she was looking for something else, too. Maybe acceptance?

"Yeah." Jonathan's voice cracked. He cleared his throat and tried again. "Yeah. I'm fine."

Definitely not thinking about Steve laying awake all night picturing me the same way I think of him , he added, mentally.

Nancy searched his face for a second longer, before nodding and turning away from him, lost in thought. Maybe she wasn't taking this as easily as he initially thought.

Jonathan realized that there was a rapidly cooling cup of cocoa in his hands. He brought the cup up to his lips and took a drink, hoping that it would help steady his nerves.

"So you both wanna fuck Steve?" Dustin asked, glancing at them with mild curiosity.

Jonathan choked. He leaned forward, coughing. Nancy gently patted his back and, presumably, glared daggers at Dustin.

Why did people always say stuff like that when he was drinking?

"Wow," Mike said blandly from his corner. "A real life spit take."

"Shut it," Nancy snapped, though there wasn't much heat behind it.

"I told you, Will," Dustin gestured with his empty cup at Jonathan and Nancy. "Your brother gets you more than anyone. He also likes dudes."

Will's face lit up like a stoplight.

"I-I-I w-wasn't ready!" Will squeaked, attempting to hide behind his coffee cup.

"How about we all just pretend we didn't learn any of this when we go back to our time?" Nancy suggested.

Will nodded vigorously.

Nancy stared at Dustin and Mike until they relented.

"Fine," Mike said. "But now we have proof of your sexual tension and it's going to be even worse to suffer through."

"Who has sexual tension?"

Jonathan whirled to see Lucas and Max standing in the hallway.

“No one,” Dustin said, giving a very large and very obvious wink at the other two.

Oh god.

“That better not be a wink meaning that you’re gonna tell someone else’s secrets, Dustin.”

Steve stepped into the room, pushing the other two deeper in so he could pass.

Dustin faltered. “No.”

Steve gave him a look.

“I promise,” Dustin said, earnestly.

Steve cracked a smile. “I messing with you. I know you won’t. At least, I don’t remember you telling me. And you tell me everything.” Steve stops, his face taking on a weird expression. “*Everything*.”

Jonathan didn’t want to know what Steve knows. Considering that Dustin had three kids now he wanted to know even less.

“So, Terry,” Steve leaned over the counter again. Either he really liked the kitchen or he wanted to put some distance between himself and the others. “How’s it going.”

“Five more minutes,” Terry replied.

Steve nodded. He looked back up at everyone else. “This is everybody who came through, right?”

“Yeah,” Will said.

“Great!” Steve smiled. “That means that the number of kids I have to babysit going down and I can go back to worrying about—”

A weird song started playing (at least, he hoped it was a song. It sounded atrocious and had no instruments Jonathan recognized), interrupting Steve. It didn’t seem to have a source, but it still sounded as if it was coming from a stereo.

“Hang on a second,” Steve said, fishing something out of his pocket. It was a strange, flat rectangle. Steve glanced at it before tapping it and placing it to his ear.

“Hey Nance, how’s Canada?”

That was a *phone* ?

“Yeah, they just left,” Steve continued, stepping out of the kitchen and towards the hallway. “Yes, I reminded him.”

There was a long pause, and Steve stopped, turning to face them, his focus still on the phone(?).

“Yeah, nice of you and El to give me a heads up,” Steve sighed, crossing his arms. “It’s Lucas, Max, Dustin, El, Mike, you, and Jon.”

Jonathan felt himself heat up involuntarily at the nickname.

“Nance, I’ve been babysitting for over 30 years now and I’ve only burnt the house down twice. They’re fine.”

Wait, *twice* ?

Steve’s face fell slightly. “No, I think this was the first time. I’m sure you don’t remember, but I have vivid memories of Hopper and Joyce demanding to know what happened. And the way things have gone...” Steve bit his lip. “Yeah, I don’t think so either. This is probably the last time. Which means—”

Steve cut himself off, and Jonathan could almost make out Nancy’s voice.

“Well I can have them tell him if you really want, Nance, but I’m sure he knew.”

Jonathan was starting to get irritated. This was obnoxious. He wanted to go back to his own time when things made sense and he didn’t *kiss Steve Harrington* .

Steve laughed. “I can give you to Dustin if you’re really that concerned.”

“Me?” Dustin asked, pointing to himself, bewildered.

Steve laughed again. “Got it. Here he is.”

Steve started to pull the phone away when Jonathan heard Nancy’s voice suddenly get really loud. Steve pulled it back and listened for a second. “I mean, be my guest.”

Steve held the phone in front of him, then took a few steps over towards Dustin. “Alright so she wants to video chat because she misses your hair, apparently,” Steve said, tapping the phone a little.

“My hair?” Dustin patted his head a few times.

“Yeah so basically you just hold this and her picture should—Hey Nance! Just a sec I’m showing him how this works.” Steve gave the phone to Dustin, whose eyes blew wide.

“It’s like a tiny TV!” he exclaimed.

Jonathan heard Nancy’s laugh from the box, suddenly loud and a little staticy.

“Oh man just wait until you get here,” future-Nancy said. Jonathan felt faint. “There’s so much more fun stuff! Like tablets, and YouTube.”

Dustin’s eyes were sparkling.

“Okay, now can you move into the hallway?” future-Nancy said. “Make sure that the Nancy there isn’t visible through the camera, and neither is the Mike. Don’t want a paradox on Prom Night.”

How many paradoxes had happened, that everybody joked around in the same way?

Dustin did as asked, disappearing into the hallway with the phone clutched to his chest. He moved far enough away that eventually Jonathan couldn’t hear either of them anymore.

“No fair!” Lucas cried. “Why does Dustin get the cool stuff?”

"Because Dustin has a job to do," Steve said, a small twinkle in his eye.

Jonathan wanted to go home. This was too much.

Steve collected the empty cups, bringing them into the kitchen and placing them into the sink.

"You guys went through me, right?" Steve asked, his back turned.

"We what?"

Steve turned, and dish towel in his hand that he flipped over his shoulder.

"When El started glowing, who did she grab and make glow?"

"You," Mike said, sounding only a little bitter.

Steve fixed him with a look. "It doesn't feel good, kid. You get however many people passing through your body twice within a few hours. Normally El chooses me or Jonathan because she doesn't know us as well." Steve glances at El, who is sitting up and looking much healthier. "Yet."

Terry's eyes snapped open, the room swaying a little bit and wind pushing away from her. "Done," she said with a tone of finality.

"Awesome," Steve said, clapping his hands. "Now we just wait for—" Steve cut himself off as Dustin came back in, inspecting the phone. "Great, everybody's here." He grabbed his phone from Dustin who gave a disgruntled "hey!" and looked back at Terry.

"Can you gather everyone's thoughts for Grandpa?" Terry nodded, then sat down, her hair beginning to float a little around her head.

"What did Nancy tell you?" Lucas whispered when Dustin got close.

"It's a secret," Dustin replied. "I can tell you in a year."

"A whole year!" Lucas cried. "That's like, a long time!"

“Got it,” Terry said, her hand bouncing back to its original position. She turned to El and held out her hand.

Something...weird and magnetic seemed to pass between the two, and El took Terry’s hand again, a small, invisible spark of something passing between them.

“Awesome,” Steve said. “Now everybody can go back where they belong and I’ll stop having to spend so much on hair dye.”

Jonathan eyed the older man, having no clue what that meant. Steve’s hair looked the same to him. Fluffy and touchable, like always.

Jonathan mentally shook his head.

“El, do you know how to get back?” Steve came around the counter, leaning on it from the same side as everybody else for the first time.

El looked at him for a bit before nodding once.

“Great,” Steve said, moving over to the couch so he can sit. “Terry, tell everybody ‘bye.’”

“Bye,” Terry said, glancing around the room.

“Wait,” Dustin said, looking at Steve mildly panicked. “Can’t we stay here a little longer?”

“No can do, Dusty,” Steve shook his head. “The longer your here the more chances of a paradox. I say we quit while we’re ahead.” He held his hands out towards El. She took them. “Work your magic, miss psychic.”

El closed her eyes, moving her hands to grip his collar.

“Oh right,” Steve grit his teeth. “I forgot that’s where—”

Suddenly there was a burst of light and Jonathan felt like he was flying.

Notes for the Chapter:

This one was fun to write. I always enjoy writing existential crises. Especially about the person you like liking you back.

Chapter 5 is the last one before the epilogue, but I haven't written either of those. I'm not entirely sure where I was going, and it will take some time to either a) figure it out 2) make up something new or c) work up the energy to actually do something.

I hope I figure out how to continue this fic, but I'm not sure if I will or not. Only time will tell.

See you next chapter! (Hopefully)